

*In 2013, Guyana made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government identified and rescued nine girls and one boy as suspected trafficking victims and provided labor inspectors with child labor training. In collaboration with the ILO, the Government implemented the Tackle Child Labor through Education (TACKLE) project through its conclusion in August. During the project period, school attendance and student performance increased, and the Government aims to mainstream the programs initiated under the project. In August, the Government ratified ILO Convention 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers. However, children in Guyana continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation. Guyana's legislation does not fully protect children from the worst forms of child labor. Children 17 years of age are legally permitted to engage in some hazardous activities. Further, the National Steering Committee on Child Labor appears to be inactive.*



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guyana are engaged in child labor in agriculture and the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.(1-10) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Guyana.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	23.0 (44,787)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	94.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	23.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		85.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(11)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MICS3 Survey, 2006-2007.(12)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

**Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, activities unknown (2-4, 7, 9, 10, 13)
	Forestry, including logging,* preservation of lumber,* and work in sawmills* (2-4, 7, 9, 10)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (3, 4, 7, 13)
Industry	Construction, activities unknown*† (3, 4)
	Welding* (4)
	Mining, including gold mining*† (1-4, 7, 9, 10, 13-16)
Services	Domestic service (3, 7)
	Work in bars and restaurants* (3, 7)
	Street vending (3, 4, 7, 17)

**Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity (cont)**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1-10)

\* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.




Children in Guyana, including girls as young as 12, are involved in commercial sexual exploitation in Georgetown and in the country's interior. There are reports of young girls being trafficking to mining communities for commercial sexual exploitation.(4-10, 18)

In 2011, with assistance from the ILO, the Government conducted a Child Labor Rapid Assessment to better understand the nature of child labor in the country.(19) However, the results of that survey have not yet been released to the public.(4)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Guyana has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

**Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor**

	Convention	Ratification
	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

In August 2013, Guyana ratified ILO C. 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.(20)

The Government has established relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Education Act (1, 21, 22)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Occupational Safety and Health Act (21, 23)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		List of Hazardous Occupations and Processes (13, 24)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Constitution of Guyana (25)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act (26)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Protection of Children Act (27)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Protection of Children Act (10)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Defense Act (10, 28, 29)

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Education Act (22)
Free Public Education	Yes		Constitution of Guyana (25)

\* No conscription or no standing military.

Although the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act of Guyana prohibits children under age 18 from working at night in industrial undertakings, Article 2 of the Schedule permits children ages 16 and 17 to perform certain types of work that require continuity through day and night, including in certain gold mining processes and in the production of iron, steel, glass, paper, and raw sugar.(21) The Government has issued a list of 22 hazardous occupations and processes that could threaten the health, safety, or moral or personal development of children; the list only prohibits children age 16 and younger from engaging in specified hazardous activities.(13, 24) Therefore, children age 17 are not fully protected from engaging in hazardous work.

Although Article 351 of the Criminal Law Offences Act prohibits the selling, publishing, and exhibiting of obscene material, Guyanese law does not explicitly outlaw child pornography.(1, 3, 26, 30, 31) There is no compulsory recruitment in Guyana.(10, 28)

Despite the legal guarantee of free education in Article 27 of the Constitution of Guyana, some primary schools continue to charge fees; some have even attempted to prevent children from attending school for failure to pay.(32, 33) However, the Government is attempting to address this problem. The Ministry of Education has publicized guidance advising parents and educators that only the Parent Teacher Association has the authority to approve and collect fees from parents, and that no child may be excluded from school for non-payment.(33)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Human Services and Social Security (MLHSSS)	Monitor and enforce child labor laws in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Forestry Commission, the Geology and Mines Commission, and the Guyana Police Force.(4, 10) At the MLHSSS, chief labor officer handles special investigations stemming from child labor complaints and oversees routine labor inspections.(10)
Guyana Police Force (GPF)	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking and use of children for illicit activity.(4)

Law enforcement agencies in Guyana took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2013, officials from the Ministry of Labor, Human Services and Social Security (MLHSSS) were trained on child labor issues.(10) Based on reporting by the Government of Guyana, the MLHSSS conducted 2,218 inspections in 2013 and did not discover any cases of child labor.(34) Labor inspectors prioritized inspections in the mining, logging, and agriculture sectors.(34) According to most recent information, in 2013 the Ministry had employed 17 labor inspectors.(35) According to reports, including from the MLHSSS, there are sometimes delays in accessing the resources needed to carry out inspections to monitor child labor, particularly in remote areas, where law enforcement presence is low.(4, 10)

#### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

The Guyana Police Force (GPF) works on criminal cases involving victims of the worst forms of child labor in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs, the MLHSSS, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of

Amerindian Affairs, depending on the circumstances of the cases.(4) In 2013, the Government identified and rescued nine girls and one boy as suspected trafficking victims.(35) During the reporting period, the GPF also conducted training sessions on trafficking in persons for students; nurses; regional officials; and police officers stationed in Bartica, Lethem, and Port Kaituma.(9) However, the Government's capacity to carry out prosecutions is limited. With only 33 justices and magistrates, the courts have a backlog of cases on all matters of law with more than a 2-year waiting period.(2, 4, 9, 10, 36)

### IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSCCL)	Recommend policies and programs to eliminate child labor.(2, 10) A committee within the MLHSSS. Includes representatives of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child, the Bureau of Statistics, the National Teacher's Union, the GPF, as well as of the Ministries of Education; Amerindian Affairs; Health; and Culture, Youth and Sports.(37)
Commission on the Rights of the Child	Protect and promote children's rights in accordance with the UN CRC, which includes addressing the worst forms of child labor.(4)
National Task Force for Combatting Trafficking in Persons	Report on the nature and magnitude of trafficking in persons in Guyana, document the Government's response, and carry out public education and prevention measures.(38) Meets monthly.(10)

Evidence suggests the National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSCCL) has stopped meeting on a regular basis, potentially limiting its ability to carry out its mandates.(39)

### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Guyana has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

**Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
Five-year Strategic Plan on the Rights of the Child*	Protects and promotes children's rights in Guyana and advances the UN CRC.(4)
National Education Policy*	Aims to provide equal access to quality education for all children and eliminate barriers to education, especially for the poor.(40)

\*The impact of this policy on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Guyana funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Tackle Child Labor through Education (TACKLE)	Jointly launched by the European Commission and the ILO to combat child labor through education in 12 African and the Caribbean countries and the Pacific group of states.(41) In Guyana, aims to increase school attendance, by reducing truancy and school dropout rates.(1, 19, 42) Provided entrepreneurial, technical, vocational and life skills training to out-of-school and unemployed youth.(4) In 2013, School Retention and Child Labor Program supported by TACKLE continued to serve communities in Region 4, providing nutrition enhancement, transportation support to school, homework assistance, and psychosocial support for parents and children.(34) During the reporting period, program also undertook awareness-raising activities.(34) Concluded in August 2013.(43) During 5-year project period, participating schools experienced higher student retention, improved student behavior, and better performance on examinations.(44) The MLHSSS is seeking support from the private sector to mainstream the program into its service delivery.(44)
Trafficking Hotline‡	Government-funded hotline to assist trafficking victims, run by trained operators.(9)
Shelter for Trafficking Victims‡	Government-run shelter that houses abused and trafficked women and children for up to 6 months. Provides services, including psychological counseling and practical skills training.(1, 2, 4, 9, 10)

**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
School Meals and Uniforms*‡	Government program to provide hot meals to 16,000 students at schools in the interior, and transportation for students in several remote areas. All students in government-run schools from nursery to secondary receive vouchers to purchase school uniforms, shoes, and backpacks.(2, 4, 34, 40, 45, 46)

\*The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Guyana.

Although the Government has programs to target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to address the extent of the problem fully.

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Guyana (Table 9).

**Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Extend protections of children working at night beyond those employed in industry.	2010 – 2013
	Amend the list of hazardous work to protect children under age 18 in all listed sectors.	2010 – 2013
	Enact a law to prohibit explicitly child pornography.	2010 – 2013
Enforcement	Ensure sufficient resources are allocated in a timely manner to facilitate labor inspections.	2011 – 2013
	Dedicate more resources, namely judicial personnel, to resolving court cases, including those involving the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2013
Coordination	Ensure the NSCCL engages in regular meetings and coordination efforts.	2009 – 2013
Government Policies	Assess the impact of the Strategic Plan on Children's Rights and the National Education Policy on addressing child labor.	2010 – 2013
	Expand national education policy to achieve free universal education, as guaranteed by law.	2011 – 2013
Social Programs	Make publicly available the results of the Child Labor Rapid Assessment Survey.	2011 – 2013
	Develop new initiatives and expand existing programs to reach all children involved in the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2013
	Assess the impact the school meals program may have on child labor.	2013

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